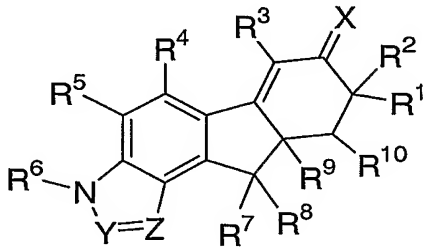
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. The use of an ERβ agonist for the preparation of a medicament useful in the treatment of hypertension, cardiac dysfunction or stroke, in a mammal in need thereof.

2. The use according to Claim 1 wherein the agonist is a compound of the formula:



wherein X is O or N-OR^a;

Y is N or CH;

Z is N or CR^f;

R^1 is hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl;

R^2 is hydrogen, hydroxy, iodo or C_{1-6}alkyl;

R^3 is hydrogen, fluoro, chloro, bromo, iodo, cyano, nitro, NR^aR^c, OR^a, $S(O)R^a$, SO_2R^a, SR^a, $C(=O)R^a$, CO_2R^c, $CONR^aR^c$, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, 4-7 membered heterocycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, arylalkyl, or heteroarylalkyl, wherein said alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, aryl and heteroaryl groups are optionally substituted with 1, 2 or 3 groups selected from the group consisting of fluoro, chloro, bromo, iodo, cyano, OR^a, NR^aR^c, $O(C=O)R^a$, $O(C=O)NR^aR^c$, $NR^a(C=O)R^c$, $NR^a(C=O)OR^c$, $C(=O)R^a$, CO_2R^a, $CONR^aR^c$, $CSNR^aR^c$, SR^a, $S(O)R^a$, SO_2R^a, $SO_2NR^aR^c$, LR^d, and MLR^d ;

R^4 is hydrogen, hydroxy, methyl, fluoro or chloro;

R^5 is hydrogen, hydroxy, fluoro or chloro;

R^6 is hydrogen, $(C=O)R^a$ or $(C=O)OR^a$;

R^7 is hydrogen, fluoro, chloro or C_{1-6}alkyl;

R^8 is hydrogen, fluoro, chloro or C_{1-6}alkyl;

or R^7 and R^8, when taken together with the carbon atom to which they are attached, form a carbonyl group;

R^9 is hydrogen, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkylalkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, arylalkyl or heteroarylalkyl, wherein said alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl, aryl,

heteroaryl, arylalkyl and heteroarylalkyl groups are optionally substituted with chloro, bromo, OR^b, SR^bor 1-5 fluoro;

or R^9 and R^1, when taken together with the three intervening carbon atoms to which they are attached, form a 5-6 membered cycloalkyl ring which is optionally substituted with 1-3 fluoro, chloro, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl or C_{3-6}cycloalkylalkyl, wherein said alkyl, alkenyl and cycloalkylalkyl groups are optionally substituted with chloro, OR^b, SR^b or 1-5 fluoro;

R^{10} is hydrogen or C_{1-10}alkyl;

R^a is hydrogen, C_{1-10}alkyl or phenyl, wherein said alkyl group is optionally substituted with hydroxy, amino, $O(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, $N(C_{1-4}alkyl)_2$, phenyl or 1-5 fluoro, and wherein said phenyl group is optionally substituted with 1-3 substituents independently selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4}alkyl, OH, $O(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, NH_2, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)_2$, halo, CN, NO_2, CO_2H, $CO_2(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, C(O)H, and $C(O)(C_{1-4}alkyl)$;

R^b is hydrogen, C_{1-10}alkyl, benzyl or phenyl, wherein said phenyl group is optionally substituted with 1-3 substituents independently selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4}alkyl, OH, $O(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, NH_2, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)_2$, halo, CN, NO_2, CO_2H, $CO_2(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, C(O)H and $C(O)(C_{1-4}alkyl)$;

R^c is hydrogen, C_{1-10}alkyl or phenyl, wherein said phenyl group is optionally substituted with 1-3 substituents independently selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4}alkyl, OH, $O(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, NH_2, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)_2$, halo, CN, NO_2, CO_2H, $CO_2(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, C(O)H and $C(O)(C_{1-4}alkyl)$;

or R^a and R^c, whether or not on the same atom, can be taken together with any attached and intervening atoms to form a 4-7 membered ring;

R^d is NR^bR^c, OR^a, CO_2R^a, $O(C=O)R^a$, CN, $NR^c(C=O)R^b$, $CONR^aR^c$, $SO_2NR^aR^c$ or a 4-7 membered N-heterocycloalkyl ring that is optionally interrupted by O, S, NR^c, or C=O;

R^e is hydrogen, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, CF_3, halo, $O(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, NH_2, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)$ or $N(C_{1-4}alkyl)_2$;

R^f is hydrogen, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, CF_3, halo, $O(C_{1-4}alkyl)$, NO_2, NH_2, $NH(C_{1-4}alkyl)$ or $N(C_{1-4}alkyl)_2$;

L is CR^bR^c, C_{2-6} alkylene or C_{2-6} alkenylene, wherein said alkylene and alkenylene groups are optionally interrupted by O, S, or NR^c;

M is O, S, NR^c, C=O, O(C=O), (C=O)O, $NR^c(C=O)$ or $(C=O)NR^c$;

or a salt or stereoisomer thereof.

3. The use according to Claim 2 wherein

X is O, N-OH or N-OCH_3;

Y is N or CH;

Z is N, CH, CF or CCl;

R^1 is hydrogen or C_{1-3}alkyl;

R^2 is hydrogen, hydroxy, iodo or C_{1-3}alkyl;

R^3 is hydrogen, chloro, bromo, iodo, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl or aryl, wherein said alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl and aryl groups are optionally substituted with 1, 2 or 3 groups selected from the group consisting of fluoro, OR^a, NR^aR^c, LR^d and MLR^d ;

R^4 is hydrogen, methyl or fluoro;

R^5 is hydrogen or fluoro;

R^6 is hydrogen or $C(=O)OR^a$;

R^7 is hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl;

R^8 is hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl;

R^9 is C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl or C_{3-6} cycloalkylalkyl;

R^{10} is hydrogen.

4. The use according to Claim 2 wherein

X is O and Z is N or CH.

5. The use according to Claim 1 wherein the agonist is:

9a-ethyl-1,6-dimethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

1-chloro-9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-ethyl-6-methyl-1-nitro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

6-acetyl-9a-butyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

6-methyl-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-ethyl-4-fluoro-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

6,9a-diethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-butyl-4-fluoro-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-butyl-6-ethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indol-7(3*H*)-one;

6,9a-dimethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;

6-bromo-9a-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;

6-bromo-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-trifluoromethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-{4-[2-(1-piperidinyl)ethoxy]phenyl}-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one hydrochloride salt;
9a-ethyl-6-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-vinyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6,9a-diethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-allyl-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-isopropyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-butyl-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-cyclopentyl-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-cyano-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-methoxy-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
1-chloro-9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
1-bromo-9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-methyl-9,9a-dihydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazole-7,10(3*H*,8*H*)-dione;
10-chloro-9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
10-azido-9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-ethyl-9,9a-dihydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazole-7,10(3*H*,8*H*)-dione;
10-amino-9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-10-methoxy-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6,10-dimethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-4-fluoro-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6,9a-diethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-ethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-4-fluoro-6-trifluoromethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-methyl-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-cyano-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-methyl-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one oxime;
9a-butyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-butyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-trifluoromethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-(3,3-dimethylbutyl)-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-ethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-acetyl-9a-butyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-4-fluoro-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2, 1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-butyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-cyano-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-4-fluoro-6-trifluoromethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydroindeno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-methyl-3,9,10,11-tetrahydro-8,10a-methanoazuleno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(8*H*)-one;
6-ethyl-3,9,10,11-tetrahydro-8,10a-methanoazuleno[2,1-*e*]indazol-7(8*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*]imidazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*]imidazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6,9a-diethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*]imidazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-ethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*]imidazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-allyl-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-trifluoromethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6,9a-diethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-butyl-9a-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-ethyl-6-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-methyl-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-propyl-6-vinyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-ethyl-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-allyl-9a-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6,9a-dipropyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-bromo-9a-butyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-methyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-ethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6-allyl-9a-butyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-propyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-trifluoromethyl-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;

9a-butyl-6-(2-furyl)-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
6,9a-diethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
9a-butyl-6-ethyl-4-fluoro-8,9,9a,10-tetrahydrofluoreno[1,2-*d*][1,2,3]triazol-7(3*H*)-one;
or a salt or stereoisomer thereof.

6. The use according to Claim 1 which further comprises an antihypertensive agent selected from the group consisting of a calcium channel blocking agent, a beta-adrenergic blocking agent, an angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor, angiotensin-II receptor antagonist, a thiazide diuretic and a peripheral vasodilator.

7. The use according to Claim 6 wherein the calcium channel blocking agent is bepridil, diltiazem, felodipine, isradipine, nicardipine, nifedipine, nimodipine, verapamil or amlodipine.

8. The use according to Claim 6 wherein the beta-adrenergic blocking agent is acebutolol, atenolol, betaxolol, bisoprolol, carteolol, labetalol, metoprolol, nadolol, penbutolol, pindolol, propranolol, sotalol or timolol.

9. The use according to Claim 6 wherein the angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor is benazepril, captopril, cilazapril, enalapril, enalaprilat, fosinopril, lisinopril, moexipril, perindopril, quinapril, ramipril or trandolapril.

10. The use according to Claim 6 wherein the angiotensin-II receptor antagonist is losartan, valsartan, irbesartan, candesartan, telmisartan or eprosartan.

11. The use according to Claim 10 wherein the angiotensin-II receptor antagonist is losartan.

12. The use according to Claim 6 wherein the thiazide diuretic is bendroflumethiazide, chlorothiazide, chlorthalidone, hydrochlorothiazide, hydroflumethiazde, methyclothiazide, metolazone, polythiazide, quinethazone or trichlormethiazide.

13. The use according to Claim 6 wherein the peripheral vasodilator is hydralazine, isoxuprine or minoxidil.

14. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an ERβ agonist, an antihypertensive agent and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.